

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1182

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5789

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC EC PFOR PINT

SUBJ: U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS' STATEMENT FOR REPEASE TO U.S. PRESS

REF: QUITO 5788

THE FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT WHICH THE FOUR U.S. BISHOPS
PLAN TO RELEASE TO THE PRESS UPON ARRIVAL IN U.S.:

BISHOPS' STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, AUGUST 14, 1976

WE FOUR BISHOPS OF THE U.S. TOGETHER WITH MR. PAUL SEDILLO
AND FATHER EDGAR BELTRAN OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC
BISHOPS CONFERENCE WERE INVITED BY THE LATIN AMERICAN SECRETARIAT
OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS TO ATTEND A MEETING
OF BISHOPS IN RIOBAMBA, ECUADOR FROM MONDAY, AUGUST 9 TO SATURDAY,
AUGUST 14. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING WAS A SHARING OF PASTORAL
EXPERIENCES OF THE PARTICIPATING BISHOPS. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE
AMERICAN BISHOPS WAS MADE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A GREATER UNDERSTAND-
ING OF THE GREAT NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN PEOPLES PRESENT IN THE
U.S. WITH THIS EXCHANGE OF IDEAS OUR PASTORAL MINISTRY TO LATIN
AMERICANS IN THE U.S. COULD BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE.

WE WISH TO CLARIFY THAT THIS MEETING WAS IN NO WAY SECRETIVE.

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ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE PRESENT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE

EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES. WE FURTHER WISH TO CLARIFY THAT THERE WAS NOTHIN SUBSERSIVE ABOUT THE MEETING ITSELF BUT IT DEALT TOTALLY WITH PASTORAL EXPERIENCES OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS.

WE DO WISH TO PROTEST THE UNFOUNDED SUSPICIONS OF THE ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE MEETING AND MOST ESPECIALLY THE CIOLENT AND FORCEFUL MANNER IN WHICH OUR MEETING WAS DISRUPTED AND ALL THE PARTICIPANTS ARRESTED. MILITARY POLICE DRESSED AS CIVILIANS FORCED ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF HOLY CROSS TOGETHER WITH THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING AT FORCE OF ARMS AND WITHOUT OFFERING IDENTIFICATION OR AN EXPLANATION OF THE ARREST TO BOARD A BUS FOR A FIVE-HOUR TRIP TO QUITO, ECUADOR. NEITHER AT THE TIME OF THE ARREST NOR DURING THE DETENTION WAS A REASON EVER OFFERED US FOR THIS VIOLENT ACT. WE WERE DETAINED FROM 5 P.M. AUGUST 12 UNTIL 8:30 P.M. AUGUST 13. WE DO WITH TO CLARIFY THAT DURING OUR DETENTION, THE TREATMENT OF ALL WAS COURTEOUS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE PAPAL NUNCIO, THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF QUITO, AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR THEIR HELP ON BEHALF OF ALL THOSE DETAINED. WE WISH TO CLARIFY THAT WE WERE IN NO WAY EXPELLED OR DEPORTED FROM THE COUNTRY. ALL WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED HAVE BEEN GIVEN UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE. WE HAVE NO ILL FEELINGS AGAINST THE COUNTRY OF ECUADOR OR HER PEOPLE BUT WE DO REGRET THIS SERIOUS AND DISGRACEFUL ACT ON THE PART OF THE ACTING MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR.

PATRICIO FLORES, BISHOP OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
ROBERTO SANCHEZ, ARCHBISHOP OF SANTE FE, NEW MEXICO
GILBERTO CHAVEZ, BISHOP IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
JUAN ARZUBE, BISHOP IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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